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ABSTRACT

The articles in this document present ideas for teaching English and the language arts creatively. Topics include a letter writing project in which ninth graders wrote letters to celebrities; an English elective course designed to increase students' creativity; ways of using the newspaper to teach language skills; the value of games in teaching grammar and other English skills; and poetry games that help students learn about poetic techniques. Reviews of three books for children and adolescents are included. (GW)

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CHISHOLM AWARD FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Citation for JOYCE STEWARD

Surely the highest commendation one English teacher can accord another is to affirm that that individual has truly "made a difference" to students, other teachers, indeed to the total English profession. By this criterion, Joyce Steward emerges as the "Compleat Teacher." She is a gifted writer and speaker, an avid reader, a person of enviable vitality, self-discipline, and diverse accomplishments. One is reminded of George Barker's lines in praise of his mother: "She is a procession no one can follow after/ But be like a little dog following a brass band."

No one who studies or works with Joyce comes away untouched by her undeviating commitment to serious scholarship, her insistence on the pursuit of excellence both in one's personal and intellectual life. She has never needed a Socrates to remind her that "The unexamined life is not worth living," and she makes it her daily business to involve others in the kind of intensive examination of language and ideas that alone leads to understanding of ourselves, our history, the context in which we live. If, by now, you have concluded that Joyce is a dedicated Humanist, how right you are! Perhaps the high-point in her evolving career was being chosen, in 1961, as a John Hay Fellow, a grant enabling her to deepen her humanistic interests during an exhilarating year of study at Yale University.

Demonstrating her characteristic modesty and generosity of spirit, Joyce recently wrote: "I feel that educationally I have been the receiver of some of the best teaching ever possible. --I have truly had some of the world's great teachers, and I have a feeling that people who 'gladly learn' are those who 'gladly teach.'" All her life she has "gladly learned," starting with her under-graduate years at Grinnell, where she earned her B.A. and a Phi Beta Kappa Key. Following an M.A. at Drake, she has continued her studies at Iowa, Madison, and Yale universities.

Meanwhile, having "gladly learned," she has always "gladly" and generously devoted her life to teaching, commencing with two years in a small town school in Radcliffe, Iowa, where she had five preparations, coached the school plays, put out the newspaper, and sponsored the cheerleaders. In her words: "I loved it!" At Madison West High School, where she began teaching in 1951, she introduced a world literature course and Advanced Placement English program that still remain. In the fall of 1963 she moved to LaFollette High School, Madison's first new high school in 35 years, assuming the chairmanship. In the fall of 1966 she accepted a position at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, to help with the administration of freshman composition and to teach English 309, the course in Advanced Composition for prospective English teachers. Since then, she has attained the rank of full professor in the Department of English, taught in summer NDEA Institutes, and developed, on campus, one of the finest writing laboratories in the nation.

On the state and national professional scene, also in publications, Joyce has accumulated an awesome dossier. She is a charter member of our WCTE and has served schools throughout the state since the early '50's by means of workshops, publication, speeches, consultative visits. The best pages of the literature portion of the Wisconsin Project English publication of the early '60's came from her typewriter. She has been a frequent judge of NCTE and Junior Academy writing entries; a member of the "Professional Standards Committee"; author of two service bulletins on current reading and various articles in the *Wisconsin English Journal*.

Continued on page 6

CREATIVE TEACHING AWARDS

The sixth Lucille S. Pooley Creative Teaching Award, sponsored by the Wisconsin Council Of Teachers of English, was presented to Sandra Reddemann at the council's spring conference. John M. Certalic received the runner-up award, his article starting on page 7.

LETTER WRITING: BANE TO BONANZA

SANDRA REDDEMANN
Wisconsin Hills Junior High School, Brookfield

Letter writing -- the bane of my teaching creativity. For years I licked and promised this necessary skill of communication with perfunctory lessons. My persistent feelings of guilt about poor teaching in this area were intensified by the obvious delight many of my ninth grade students evidenced in attempting to write long letters to friends during class and by those students' obvious chagrin when that attempt was aborted by me. Certainly, they appreciated the necessity of written communication, but they had repeatedly resisted the necessity of learning and using proper format - until last spring. At that time I had devised a four-week integrated skills unit based on television interview shows; and letter writing, which I had initially thought to be a minor part of the activities, was the most exciting learning experience of the year -- an educational bonanza. The key was relevancy, which I had unwittingly but inexorably established throughout the unit.

We began by discussing the ubiquitous talk shows: styles of hosts and hostesses, favorites among these television personalities, guests who have appeared on the different shows, and the interviewing process in its entirety. Students were both responsive and knowledgeable. Their assignment was to create their own talk show and assume the role of its host or hostess. They were not to just imitate a known personality but to develop a unique characterization of their own. Next, they were to select a living person to "interview" on the show. This guest could be from any field, anywhere in the world. The basic requirement was that this person would have to be interesting to a TV audience. They were to prepare a 2 - 3 minute introduction for this guest, an introduction that would be exciting, informative and would suggest to the audience that a fascinating interview would follow, and they were each to simulate this introduction before the class. Finally, they were to write to their "guests" about their assignment, including their reasons for choosing that person and two questions they would use had they the actual opportunity to interview them. My objective was to integrate the teaching of the following skills:

1. Library research in current periodicals and biographicals
2. Process of summarization
3. Questioning for interviewing
4. Creative dramatics
5. Speaking poise
6. Critiquing
7. Formal letter writing.

My thinking was that the class presentations would be the focal point of this unit. I was wrong.

Fascination with the letter writing process became evident from the beginning of our week of library research. Students had little difficulty picking a guest, ranging from Irving Robbins of Baskin Robbins to Golda Meir to O. J. Simpson (only one student could select a particular personality), and little difficulty finding biographical information. In addition to current periodicals, individual biographies or autobiographies, they became familiar with the following publications: *Current Biography, McGraw-Hill's Encyclopedia of World Biography, Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the World, World Almanac* and *Encyclopedia of Associations*. Although my classes were interested in the information derived from these sources, their excitement focused on obtaining the current addresses of their national and international figures. We often found ourselves playing detective with the help of our astute librarian; and if recent addresses were not available through *Current Biography* or the various Who's Whos, students learned that they could forward their letters through national associations, publishing companies, and television networks. The reiteration of, "Do you have your address yet?" foreshadowed the preoccupation with the letters that was soon to follow.

Before any letters could be written, however, students had to organize their introductions from which they would select several questions to use. We discussed the format that popular talk show personalities use for their introductions. The class quickly concluded that the most interesting, current, and significant information was placed first and in descending order of importance to capture the attention of the vast TV audience. Therefore, they would summarize their research in that manner. Students also concluded that almost every talk show host suggested several questions to be asked and that this was done right before the guest was brought out to hold the attention of the audience. They would use the same basic format.

Now they were ready to write their letters. I had anticipated the usual resistance to lessons about date line, inside address, and properly punctuated salutations. Students' zeal to send a perfect letter was both surprising and gratifying. The surprise was short-lived, until I realized that these people to whom they were writing had become very important; they had picked individuals they admired and wanted to emulate in the first place; secondly, research had made their choices more familiar to them, and finally, the process of simulating an introduction had encouraged them to formulate questions, the answers to which they wanted. No writing assignment had ever stimulated such careful thought, wording, and painstaking attention to mechanics. We worked several days in class so that I was available for help and students could edit each other's letters. Their early drafts were written on regular paper and handed in to me for final approval and grading. I gave two grades: one for organization, which was specified earlier in this paper, and use of content; the other for mechanics and proper letter writing format. Students then brought stationery from home to use for the actual letter. They were also responsible for providing their stamps and soon realized the expense of sending mail overseas. I had them use their home addresses in the heading and on the envelope because I wanted them to receive their eagerly awaited answers personally.

Soon afterward, classes began to present their introductions. We had taken time to talk about their favorite interviewers from Barbara Walters and Dinah Shore to Johnny Carson, Phil Donahue and Mike Wallace. They discussed the unique characteristics each one used in the interviewing process, and I gave them a sample of how different characteristics can be exaggerated for the purpose of the class presentations. My show was Hollywood Handsomes; my guest, Robert Redford, whom, to my surprise, no

student had chosen. I wore an outlandish hat as an attention-getting device and used the following question at the conclusion of my introduction: "We are all anxious to hear Robert Redford's response to critics who claim that he used 'All The President's Men', a story of national shame, as a means to add to his personal fortune. We understand he is now considering a movie version of 'The Final Days'. Is he insensitive to the humiliation such a movie would bring to innocent members of the Nixon family?" I made certain that students understood I had developed the characterization of an aggressive interviewer, and they quickly associated the characterization of aggressiveness with Mike Wallace of "Sixty Minutes" in contrast to the more gentle manner of Pete Wilson on "The Making Of." Their comments assured me that they realized different styles fit different shows and appealed to different audiences. They had become a more discriminating audience themselves.

What kind of a show did each one want? What characterization would each develop as a host? After I pulled names from a bag to determine the order of presentation, these concerns busied them as they prepared their introductions, which were indeed interesting and creative. I graded them separately on content and delivery. Students were aware of the criteria I would use before they prepared their presentations. Each one had been given the following sample:

Content

1. Was information representative of past and current biographical data?
2. Was information organized in order of descending importance?
3. Would suggested questions act as stimuli to an interesting interview?

Delivery

1. Had student assumed the role of a talk show host or hostess?
2. Did the student evidence good speaking poise?
   a. Eye contact
   b. Diction
   c. Pace
   d. Voice variation
   e. Appropriate body movements

Not only did I hand each student a graded criteria sheet at the conclusion of his introduction, the class as a whole critiqued each performance according to the given criteria. We had clearly established the ground rules rules for constructive criticism, and students did an excellent job of giving and receiving the oral evaluation of their classmates. Yet, despite the entertainment inherent in the classroom presentations, the thought that pre-empted all others was: Will I get an answer to my letter?

Within a week responses arrived, and they continued intermittently for the remaining six weeks of school. The palpable excitement of the students and their teacher made this the most memorable of ten years' teaching experience. Lengthy personal letters arrived from: Carol Burnett, O. J. Simpson, the assistant director to Jacques Cousteau, Johnny Rutherford, skier Greg Jones, Henry Aaron, the director of the World Boxing Association, Irving Robbins, personal secretaries to Betty Ford, Richard Nixon, and Germaine Greer. Students sought me in the halls with, "I got my letter!" Each recipient proudly read and displayed his letter while students themselves took note of the logos and general formats of the replies. They were surprised that Carol Burnett dictated her letter on a Sunday, and I was surprised that they paid attention to the date. Again, I was made aware of their interest in the mechanics of letter writing as well as the content of the answers. I was also made aware of the fact that busy people took the time to respond to the questions my students had written. Of course, many members of the classes received impersonal responses, such as, pictures or printed biographical data, but almost everyone received something.

Therefore, what I had thought to be a minor part of an integrated skills unit became the focal point of the project; what had always been the nadir of relevant teaching became the pinnacle of the school year. Certainly, this is not an activity that one can use per se on a yearly basis. In the first place, the repeated selection of popular celebrities would lessen the chance of a personal response. Secondly, adaptation rather than repetition insures freshness and success in the classroom. So, I have another challenge before me -- to incorporate the same relevancy for letter writing in another integrated unit. Isn't this what makes teaching so special?

NEWSPAPER *Continued from page 15*

For a prepared talk students could make a visual--pictures, words, headlines--from the newspaper. This visual serves as the basis for a talk to the class. It could also serve as a stimulus for an essay, poem, or short story.

Such activities should give students a greater familiarity with news papers--their layout, content, tone, point of view, etc. If you want to capitalize on such familiarity and at the same time check on students' reading, set them to work to create a newspaper. The only stipulation is that the content of this newspaper must be based entirely on material which has been read in or out of class.

Activities such as the ones suggested in this article center in the newspaper as a source for lessons to teach language skills. The activities can in some instances serve as a one class period lesson or in the case of others be expanded for any number of periods. The activities emphasize a number of skills which most English teachers teach, but they also capitalize on a source that most students know. The activities provide a means for active participation by students, suggest a variety of approaches to skills, and can be adapted to most grade levels. Before you throw away today's paper, take another look at it, your language arts objectives, and your students. Activities centered around the newspaper may make fresh copy in your lesson plans.

AWARD *Continued from page 2*

Joyce is currently a member of the NCTE Commission on Composition, a position reflecting her national reputation as an authority on writing. She is author or co-author of four volumes in the Addison-Wesley series on SUCCESS IN WRITING (Books 1, 2, 3, and 6) plus INTRODUCTORY READINGS IN LITERARY CRITICISM. She is also one of the authors of ADVENTURES IN READING (Harcourt, Classic edition), with special responsibility for the teachers' manual and test booklet.

Joyce never stops learning or innovating. Before "Women's Studies" became the "in-thing," she had introduced and taught a course in Women Writers. Before other universities became aware of the need, she was teaching 3-week interim courses in writing for students in disciplines other than English. When teachers in Arkansas and North Dakota needed a "curriculum specialist," Joyce was summoned to conduct state-level in-service workshops. Directly or indirectly, she has probably influenced more teachers and school systems than any other Wisconsin English teacher we could name. Joyce works as very hard--not for glory or recognition, but for love of students and the teaching of English. No wonder students and colleagues regard her as such an exciting person, a challenging and caring human being, indeed "a procession no one can follow after."

Informed that she had been selected to receive this award, Joyce responded: "If you want to say anthing personal, you might say that I hope to go right on serving Wisconsin teachers for a while yet--but that eventually I am hoping to retire to an island in Puget Sound!" --Joyce, please postpone leaving as long as you can. You have clearly "made a difference" to our profession, and we aren't likely to stop needing you!

--written by Gladys Veidemanis, Oshkosh

TEACHING A COURSE IN CREATIVITY - PUTTING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

JOHN M. CERTALIC
Muskego High School

One of the major criticisms leveled at the junior high school is the largely unimaginative and unappealing curricular offerings for students of this age. Recognizing the need of the junior high school student to have opportunities to explore areas other than those traditionally offered, our school attempted three years ago to provide elective courses in all academic disciplines. At this time I was also becoming increasingly more interested in the various writings, particularly those of E. Paul Torrance, that offered suggestions for improving student creativity. With this background and interest in mind, I decided to design a new English elective with the ironically uncreative title of "Creativity."

To deal with all the issues and questions - evaluating creativity, what to do with the seemingly uncreative student, and relating creativity to other English courses - involved in teaching a course such as this would be prohibitive. Rather, I will share with you the design and activities of this semester elective, hoping to provide you with some ideas for improving the creativity of your own English students.

A review of the literature in creativity clearly indicates that creativity is not a quality possessed by just an elite few, but rather, it is something all of us have in some degree:

> Thus the important question is not, why do some people appear to be creative? But, rather, why is it that some people do not appear to use the creative ability with which they are endowed?
>
> -Don Fabun in *You and Creativity*

Thus, my role as the teacher is not to perform the impossible task of teaching someone else to be creative, but instead to provide experiences that will develop the creative ability that students already possess. E. Paul Torrance, in *Encouraging Creativity in the Classroom*, emphasizes this very point and identifies creative needs of people that need to be met in order for them to develop their own measure of creativity. These creative needs have become the objectives of the creativity course, so that as a result of successful participation in Creativity, students will be better able to:

1. Design and work in a creative learning environment.
2. Be more creative in terms of fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality.
3. Explore and develop their own curiosity.
4. Test the limits of their ability by attempting challenging tasks.
5. Give themselves completely over to tasks in which they are interested.
6. Be different, to be an individual.
7. Apply creative skills to problem solving and other areas of learning.
8. Explore and observe their environment.

Another important consideration is the matter of definition - exactly what is creativity? One of the very first assignments given to the students is to find five different definitions of creativity from books and from interviews with people. While the "book" definitions are varied in both length and complexity, man-in-the-street interviews generally produce definitions of creativity related to originality and the use of one's

imagination. At this point I introduce my simplified working definition of creativity, "Looking at old things in new ways." Throughout the duration of the course this definition is applied to specific examples of what we commonly refer to as creative.

This continuing application of "Looking at old things in new ways" is emphasized within the construct of skill development. Each assignment and activity is designed to improve the students' skill in the four basic components of creativity as identified by Torrance: fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality. These four skills provide the framework and direction for the day-to-day functioning of the course.

Fluency is the ability to think of a large number of ideas or ways of doing things. Creative people are able to generate many ideas or solutions to a problem. This brainstorming skill, as it is many times called, lends itself well to classroom activities and assignments.

"O.K. everyone, divide yourself into groups of four, and in fifteen minutes make a list of all the uses you can think of for a wastebasket. Let's see which group can come up with the longest list." The competition involved here has an added dimension of motivation for the junior high student, and is easily adapted to many different formats. Another example: How many different ways can you think of _____?" One adaptation that I use is to break the class down into small groups to find as many things in the room that are normally not found in a "regular" English classroom. Fluency skills and investigative powers of observation improve as the students explore every nook and cranny in their search for obscure items.

Flexibility, the ability to think in terms of different categories and classifications, to organize things or ideas into hierarchies and patterns, is the second creative skill . Applying this skill to the "How many uses can you think of for a wastebasket?" exercise involves classifying each of these different uses. Containers, weapons, furniture, musical instruments are all common categories of uses that appear. When we go over each group's list we note that while one group may be very fluent and have a very long list, another group will have a shorter list but with more classifications. Both groups can be said to be creative, but in the two different contexts of fluency and flexibility.

Creative writing exercises also lend themselves well to the flexibility concept. For example, one activity uses a series of five pictures set up in the front of the room, giving the students ten minutes to write a plot outline of a story incorporating the events depicted in the pictures in the order given. After some of the stories are read aloud, the pictures are shuffled, the students following the same instructions as before. Stories are then read aloud again, the difference between the first set and the second being noted. Further, both sets of stories are classified in terms of theme, happy or sad endings, etc., with the point made that creative people, even under certain restrictions, are able to think in terms of different patterns.

Analogy exercises are also used to develop student flexibility. In one exercise, three words are listed, with the student supplying another word that shares something in common with them.

1.	nap	bird	call	(cat)
2.	show	oak	plan	(floor)
3.	golf	foot	country	(club)
4.	base	snow	dance	(ball)
5.	light	village	golf	(green)

A similar exercise has three words listed with the student having to state what the three words share in common:

1.	tea cup	envelop	shoe	(all containers)
2.	blood	newspapers	air	(deal with circulation)
3.	radio	magazine	drum	(all communicate)
4.	nail	drum	ball	(something you hit)
5.	elephant	tree	baggage car	(all have a trunk)

Solving riddles and puzzles are still other activities I use to develop flexibility skills. These samples focus on the necessity of being observant of every detail, as well as getting out of one's mental rut and mind-set in looking at the world.

1. Why can't a man living in Atlanta, GA be buried west of the Mississippi River? (he's still alive, only dead people are buried)
2. What unusual characteristic do these six words have in common:
   deft sighing calmness canopy first stun
   (all of them have a set of three consecutive letters of the alphabet in their spelling)
3. A beggar's brother died, but the man who died had no brothers. Why? (the beggar was a woman)

Flexibility skills are also developed with several "hands-on" activities. Students are divided into small groups and given a packet of 12-15 totally unrelated slides, such as a fish, an old car, a mother rocking her child, etc. They are then told to arrange the slides in a meaningful order to tell a story, as well as to produce an appropriate sound track that explains the story line of their presentation.

"Newspaper poems" may also be used to increase flexibility. Each student is given a section of the newspaper, from which he is to cut the headline words from different articles to form the words of a poem. Given a one class-period time restriction, the poems are not Pulitzer Prize winners, but they do provide a good opportunity to take something from one pattern or classification and to use it in another area, poetry.

Torrance defines the third basic component of creativity, elaboration, as the ability to take an idea or thought or thing and change it or modify it into something different. Examples of this kind of creativity are countless. Inventions and technological developments are perhaps the most numerous and practical examples of taking old things, ideas, or concepts and modifying them to create something new. Referring to the wastebasket exercise again, it is interesting to note all the responses on the list that alter the basic design of the wastebasket to create a new use. Attaching a large handle, for example, making the wastebasket a large coffee cup, would illustrate the elaboration principle.

An exercise students seem to enjoy that develops elaboration skills involves playing several pieces of programmatic music while the students settle back and relax to use their imaginations. They are to let the music lead their minds in whatever direction it wants to go, and then to write down what the music made them think about. Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition,* and Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* are good selections to play for this exercise, for they always evoke creative and imaginative responses. Moreover, it's interesting to compare what the composer was trying to describe with his music with what the students thought the particular piece was describing.

This same process of taking one sensory stimulus, processing it through one's imagination and altering the original stimulus to produce a product in a different sensory medium can also be used effectively with visual stimuli. A slide or photograph, for example, is shown to the class; they are instructed to write a brief story, using the slide or photo as a stimulus. These are then read aloud in class, the stories being compared to each other and analyzed in terms of the elaboration skill displayed.

Elaboration skills are also developed in the production of slide/tape presentations. After some basic instruction in how to make slides from pictures in magazines or books using a photographic copy stand, the students are then divided into small groups for the purpose of producing a presentation with a minimum of 18 slides. The students can either make the slides first and then the sound track on cassette tape, or write the narration, tape it, then make slides to accompany the sound track. In either case, organizing a presentation such as this involves taking something and modifying it by putting it in a different context to create something new.

Originality, the fourth component of creativity, is defined by Torrance as the ability to think of or do something no one else has thought of or done. The major activity I use to develop this skill is a five week filmmaking unit. I begin this by showing the films made by previous classes, which serves to motivate the class to do a better job on the film that they themselves make. (There are many books on the market that explain the "how to's" of this project; I recommend the book I found useful, *Motion Picture Production Handbook* by Arden Rynew, published by the Pflaum/Standard Company.)

Gestaldt fantasy exercises are also used to develop originality skills. Students are instructed to find a comfortable and secluded place in the room where they can be as isolated as possible from everyone else. Total silence is maintained. With the room darkened, relaxation exercises are conducted to help put the students' minds in the most suitable state for allowing their imaginations to work. Then I begin to create a scene for them: "Imagine yourself as a tree stump in the mountains. What are you like? Visualize your surroundings. Nearby is a cabin. Become this cabin in your imagination; what are you like? What are you like on the inside; what has your past been like as this cabin? Now talk to the tree stump, what do you say, and how does the tree stump respond?"

The scene created by the teacher can go on indefinitely, with many details and complexities added. John Stevens book, *Awareness: Experimenting, Exploring, Experiencing* provides a particularly rich source of fantasy situations that are easily adapted for classroom use. Following the reading by the teacher and the fantasizing by the student, volunteers are called upon to relate their own unique fantasy. Common threads running throughout most of the fantasies are noted, as well as unusual items found in individual fantasies. Students really seem to enjoy this activity; for once they are encouraged to daydream in class.

Forced association, the ability to take two or more dissimilar items and somehow put them together to make a meaningful whole, is another part of originality. One effective exercise used to develop this particular skill is extension writing. In this activity students are first asked to pick a number from 1-4, then another number from 5-8, and then to write the two numbers selected in the upper right-hand corner of their paper. With this out of the way, the class is to think of a list of as many unusual animals as possible, with the more suitable selections listed on the chalkboard. Following this, the class then makes an equally creative list of past tense intransitive verbs; again, the more imaginative choices are listed on the board.

The more creative animals and verbs from the two lists on the chalkboard are matched with the set of numbers that began the exercise; numbers 1-4 correspond to the animals, while 5-8 correspond to the verbs. Here is a possible arrangement:

1. Spider	3. Whale	5. Gargled	7. Waltzed
2. Llama	4. Buzzard	6. Kissed	8. Cried

The students then refer to their original number selection and discover the title of a story they are to write, following the format of "The (animal) that (verb)." Thus, a 2-6 combination would yield, "The Llama that Kissed," while a 4-7 pattern yields, "The Buzzard that Waltzed."

After a series of groans when they discover the title of their story, the students are divided into 4 or 5 small groups, depending on the size of the class, and set free to begin their literary creation. When most of the class has completed several paragraphs they are told to stop, even if they are in the middle of a sentence. The stories are then rotated once within each group, students continuing to write the new story that is now before them. Then after several more paragraphs are added, the stories are rotated once again within each group. And on it goes until everyone has had a chance to add something to everyone's story in the group. Originality and forced association skills are thus developed in a humorous context that the students seem to enjoy.

Many other activities and assignments were used to develop the four basic creative skills throughout the semester, such as a study of conformity and how to live a creative lifestyle (flexibility), viewing short discussion films and analyzing the techniques that made the films creative (flexibility, elaboration, originality), field trips to an advertising agency and radio and TV studio (flexibility, elaboration, originality), and an assorted series of slide/tape presentations (elaboration and originality). The most important concern with all of these activities, as mentioned earlier, is that each one in some way improve one of the creative skills identified by E. Paul Torrance.

Putting this research into practice makes the task of evaluating student creativity less subjective and more empirical. And finally, it provides a practical framework and direction for both the teacher and the student with its strong emphasis on skill development. For while instituting an English course in creativity may not be feasible for many English teachers, implementing activities that improve fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality is certainly an attainable goal that will make for more creative students - and teachers.

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Sources of Material and Media

Tape/Recording
American Eva-Type Corp., 750 Central Ave., Deerfield, IL 60015

Film
Super 8 Filmaker, 342 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017
Management Review Center, Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20202
Pflaum/Standard Co., 38 West Fifth Street, Dayton, OH 45402

Photography
Power Sales Company, Box 113, Willow Grove, PA 19090
Eastman Kodak Co., Consumer Market Division, 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650
Visual Motivations Co., 44 Mary Watersford Road, Bala-Cynwyd, PA 19004
Hudson Photographic Industries, Irvington-On-Hudson, NY 10533

Records and Radio
Decca Records DL75125, Longines Symphonette Society, Larchment, NY
Rolling Stone Magazine, P.O. Box 12976, Oakland, CA 94604

Television
Writers Guild of America, 8955 Beverly Road, Los Anglos, CA 90048

Computers
Thomas J. Huston, Computra, Box 608, Upland, IN 46989
Digital Equipment Corp., Educational Products Group, 146 Main St., Maynard, MA 07754

Educational Games
Project Together, Dr. Willfred Roy, School of Education, UW-Milwaukee 53201
Simulation Games Center, 221 Willey St., Morgantown, WV 26505

Multi-Media
Alternate Media Center, 144 Bleecker St., New York, NY 10012
CBC Learning Systems, P.O. Box 500, Terminal A, Toronto 16, Ont. Canada
Synectics Education System, 121 Brattle St., Cambridge, MA 02138
Xerox Education Publications, Education Center, Columbus, OH 43219
Multi-Media Productions, P.O. Box 5097, Stanford, CA 94305

A NEW TEXT EVERY DAY: USING THE NEWSPAPER TO TEACH LANGUAGE SKILLS

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Language skills will be front page news if taught through the use of the daily newspaper. Its use can be an exciting and rewarding experience for both students and teachers. The newspaper as text has the advantage of being immediate, expendable, and varied in types and quality of material. Lessons in both expository and creative writing, speaking and listening, vocabulary, usage, sentence structure, reading comprehension, information-gathering, and the newspaper itself can be devised which not only enhance skills but also tend to appeal to students because the material used is so recent and in so many cases touches their daily lives and interests.

The newspaper also has the advantage of being an integrated text. Often we tend to compartmentalize our teaching into a composition unit, a speaking and listening unit, a language unit, and so on, even though no area of the language arts program is an entity unto itself. The skills that are emphasized in written composition, for example, organization, details to support a thesis or mood, awareness of audience, point of view, are much the same as those taught in speaking. Both listener and reader are expected to grasp similar aspects. Yet we tend to neglect the listening and speaking aspects of language skills, even though they will be the most important skills in the future lives of most of our students.

Another advantage of the newspaper as text is that its use forces us to get away from our overemphasis on literature in secondary English classes. That statement may sound like heresy, for all of us want our students to understand and enjoy literature, but because we ourselves enjoy literature so much (and it is easier to ask students to read and answer questions) we tend to neglect the other aspects of the language program. (As someone said, most of us became English teachers because we were the only kids in tenth grade who liked *Silas Marner*.)

In the suggestions that follow, the emphasis is on teaching skills through the use of the daily paper, not on teaching about the newspaper itself, although the students will incidentally learn a great deal about newspapers. We have found that many of the ideas are suitable for group projects as well as individual work.

A good beginning writing exercise is to rewrite a news or feature story, substituting new words for all the nouns, or all the verbs, or all the adjectives. If all the students do the same story, comparisons can elicit a good discussion of the effect of the changes on such things as tone, point of view, vividness, etc. in the rewritten story. There may also be some incidental learning about parts of speech.

Ask students to choose two or three news stories and write new topic sentences which would recast the stories as editorials, or short stories, or features, or as an expository essay. The lesson could be done two or three times on successive days to emphasize the importance of the topic sentence in telegraphing the tone, point of view, and anticipated audience, as well as the content of the writing.

Information gathering and speaking and listening skills, as well as writing skills, are involved in the project of writing a consumer's guide using one day's newspaper ads as a beginning. The students should do comparison shopping as well as comparison of the ads. Different students or different groups of students can be assigned different products. What questions do they need to ask? How will they record the information?

Another project which develops several skills is the investigation of some event or some issue for local implications. Interviews, as well as documents, are essential to the investigation. Reports can be oral or written. Similarly, students can research the background of a local story or feature, involving on-the-site visits, photographs, as well as interviews and original documents. Or students can do an extensive follow-up of a local news story.

A *Who's Who* of local personalities in the news for a week or month is also an interesting project, especially if students get as much of the information as possible from the people themselves.

A good project for reinforcing library skills is asking students to write a travel guide for a place mentioned in the day's news, or to develop an itinerary for visiting all the places mentioned in the news section or front page.

To develop skills in analysis, students can do the familiar assignment of the comparison of two accounts by different news services of the same event, or by a newspaper and a news magazine, or by a newspaper and TV program. A variation is to do an analysis (written or oral) of a particular story, feature, or column. What information did the writer have to have? What would make the information more complete? Is there evidence of bias? What is needed for a follow-up? Students often enjoy using analysis in a more indirect way if they are asked to examine the front page stories on a particular day to decide whether each would be more interesting with a picture, and if so, what kind of picture. If the story already has a picture, ask them to decide what the picture does for the story.

Good activities for vocabulary development and a feeling for structure are those which involve clipping words from headlines and recombining them in various ways. One well-known activity is the group poem, small groups working to recombine words to make a poem. Another good one is to use the clipped words to make a skeptic's, or a pessimist's or an optimist's, dictionary, asking the students to write definitions to fit the assumed personality. An individual activity is to ask each student to devise a message, using words clipped from newspaper headlines, which tells something about his or her personality, or a message for his or her parents, or an excuse for not having done the homework.

Students enjoy choosing four or five events from the day's paper and doing a broadcast script of similar events as they might be reported 200 years from now. Groups like performing the script, complete with commercials and the weather forecast.

Deductive reasoning is involved in the following activity. Ask the students to imagine that they are researchers 1,000 years from now. All the information they have about the American society of the 1970's comes from finding the classified ad section of one newspaper. What deductions could logically be made? Ask them to write an essay or short story, do a talk show or a skit, based on the deductions.

Another good activity is to have students, working in pairs, write and enact an imaginary dialogue between two people in the news on a particular day, or between a person in the news and a character from the comic strips. Also students may select characters from two different comic strips. They create a dialogue between these two characters as if they were meeting for the first time. This activity can be expanded to include more characters from additional comic strips if feasible. A variation of this activity is possible through the use of people detailed in news stories throughout the paper. The dialogue can be based on the account in the paper or it can be fantasized. Such activities highlight speaking and listening skills and actively engages students in the learning process.

Similarly, students can prepare a script and enact a jury trial from some event reported in the news. (Obviously, it is better to steer them away from a local event.) Several TV programs or the play, *12 Angry Men*, may give them ideas of how to handle this.

Often, good poems can come from students who have never written a line before if you ask them, working in small groups, to brainstorm images that come to mind during the oral reading of a selected news or feature story. Then, as a group, or individually, they can select phrases and ideas to write haiku, diamonté, or other short poems.

Give students a stipulated amount of money (imaginary gift, of course) which they can spend. Using the newspaper, they make a shopping list of what they intend to buy. Each student tells what he has bought and why. Students enjoy spending money, so an activity (even though not real) which capitalizes on this enjoyment may serve several purposes. It provides vicarious pleasure and helps students to organize, to set priorities, and to present a reasoned explanation for an action -- to say nothing of meeting some objectives of consumer education.

You can divide your class into pairs. One student selects a person mentioned in the newspaper and serves as the "celebrity" who is interviewed by the other student. Interviews are done in front of the class or taped. Students realize that they must ask the right questions to get certain information. They become aware of the fact that questions can set the tone of the interview and that their effort may affect the audience response.

A word collage can be used to stimulate vocabulary growth and to develop an awareness to and classifications or word families. Students collect nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs from the newspaper. Collages are made by using only one type of word for an individual collage. When the collages are finished, students are called on to use a word from the collage in a sentence or to give a definition of the word.

An activity which focuses on sentence completion can be developed easily from the newspaper. Students each select a part of a sentence from the newspaper and read the part. Another student must complete the sentence; sentence completions should be original and not taken from the paper. Completed sentences could serve, to expand the lesson, as the topic sentence for a paragraph or as the basis of an extemporaneous speech.

If you are interested in providing your students with an opportunity to give extemporaneous speeches and have a difficult time developing a list of appropriate topics, use the newspaper as your source. Before class, cut captions, advertisements, headlines, and so forth from the paper. Put these in a hat. Each student pulls one out and gives a two minute extemporaneous talk related to his selection. *Continued on page 6*

LEARNING FROM "THE SIXTH PERIOD ENGLISH GAME"

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Any English teacher who contemplates introducing a game into a modern classroom is subject to some painful inhibitions. Imagine yourself being asked, "What is the class going to do today?" and having to reply, "Today we are going to play a game." You might well feel an extended explanation should follow, whereas if you had simply replied, "Grammar," that one word would have sufficed. The frivolous even sinful overtone elicited by the notion of games for classroom play is suggested in the ironic title of a presentation at the 1976 NCTE Annual Convention: "'Game' is a Four Letter Word." Somehow people tend to feel the classroom, especially today's secondary English classroom, is not a suitable place to play games. The reasoning is that there just is not enough time to devote to idle fun when students can neither read nor write and when the community at large is breathing down educators' necks in a compulsion to get back to something insistently called "the basics." This line of thought is unfortunate, though, for when employed to treat specific learning objectives games can be extremely efficient.

Used in such a way games are understood to be "competitive learning contexts in which participant success is determined by the degree of subject matter comprehension -- of information, concepts, generalizations, and/or theories -- demonstrated during game play."[1] This definition implies that the effectiveness of playing an educational game relies on how specifically it treats subject matter. We may concede, then, that little curricular learning will occur if the players are not required to demonstrate well defined, accessible skills and knowledge. On the other hand, suppose a class studying verb inflections in Standard English devises a game in which the students must actually make up original sentences incorporating such features as the phoneme for the third person singular in order to make competitive gains; then the currency of play becomes the very basic skills the teacher is trying to teach, and the press of competition creates a powerful student commitment to these skills. Naturally such a game could be not only instructive but great fun as well. Furthermore, playing games in the classroom offers desirable social concomitants to a skills curriculum.

> Game playing can develop peer-group relationships among students and can build enthusiasm, attentiveness, and interest in the students. Games can give students who are normally intimidated by classwork, and particularly verbal activities, a sense of success. Hopefully, games will give the classroom the openness and diversity that are very important in motivating students to work in a multiplicity of learning situations.[2]

The fact is that quite independent of the particular content of a game, just the act of vying for mastery among one's peers can be enormously motivating.

A good way to optimize both motivation and learning is to have the students themselves devise crucial specifics of a game. In the words of one educator, "When students create their own games, they often learn more than when the teacher creates the game or buys it for them. If a game is constructed properly, it can serve as a good review for what the teacher has been hoping the students have learned."[3] Furthermore, if a game is largely their own creation, students have a stake in making it work, so

the teacher can be relieved of considerable administrative burden. Still, there must be enough structure in the planning stages to insure logical, smooth playing procedures. The following steps have proven effective in leading students to devise games which treat specific skills as the commodity of play.

1. Choose the skills to be reinforced--Just about anything in the English curriculum which requires a student behavior of some kind can be incorporated into a game. There must, however, be an understandable, authoritative source in which the performance, doctrine or knowledge is given. Usually this source will be a textbook, but it might well be locally published material. The authoritative source must be available to all students for study and reference.

2. Decide on a play card format--Considering the content, evolve a stimulus pattern which will clearly direct player performance. This pattern will be followed by students as they write activities on the cards to be drawn by players in future competition. The items on the play cards should not require pat answers in the manner of a quiz show type question but should require players to make original statements that can be readily judged appropriate or inappropriate. For example, it would not be suitable to ask a player to "Give the third person singular past tense of climb." It would be suitable to ask a player to, "Make a statement using a form of 'to climb' as the main verb. This statement must be about [Robert] going up something high yesterday." The idea is for players to undertake meaningful languaging rather than to recite paradigms.

3. Assign teams and write play cards--Try to balance teams in terms of student ability. Teams should choose colorful names like "The Avengers", "The Turkeys", "The Blind Fools" etc. Explain the format of the cards and assign each team to write a number of cards which treat a specific area of the game's content. Each card should have a problem stated on one side and a typical, valid solution on the other. A good game needs at least 100 cards, but since the students learn by writing these items, each student could be responsible for as many as 10 cards. During the writing the teacher should circulate to insure the students are on the right track. Significant one-to-one tutoring can occur at this stage.

4. Decide on the game's format--Usually (and always when getting started with games) it is best to design some sort of board game on which tokens are moved according to responses to the play cards. As students get more adept at gaming, the playing format and rules can get more refined and complex. Markers or play money can be used as rewards, and various types of transactions can be effected as wealth piles up for teams who give good answers.

5. Establish rules--Some discussion of rules will have taken place in designing the game format, but at this stage the rules should be refined until they are crystal clear and as uncomplicated as possible. Every student should have a copy.

6. Conduct a dry run--Create an abbreviated form of the game and play a few rounds to test procedures. For example, for a board game a few spaces can be outlined on the blackboard and chalk marks can substitute for tokens. Evaluate the play and get the kinks out.

7. Make the necessary hardware--Bulletin boards can be used as the playing surface for board games with tokens affixed to thumb tacks; but since each class will be designing its own game, board space must be apportioned equitably.

8. Play! In case the game pertains to a limited unit of study, it probably ought to be abandoned after the unit is terminated. If the game pertains to basic skills such as the conventions of a second dialect or rhetorical patterns, it can be played and developed periodically throughout the year, thus giving the type of extensive persistent reinforcement needed to master such skills.

An example of a game resulting from these procedures is "The Sixth Period English Game" (the etymology of which need not be traced). This game originally had as its grist three grammatical problem areas: troublesome verb pairs, irregular verb principal parts, and subject-verb agreement. Later, a number of other usage problem areas were added including pronoun reference and comparatives. The ninth grade class was

divided into five teams of five or six members. Each team was assigned a section of the grammar text to draw on in devising items, and each member was responsible for writing five play cards. A typical item on a card reads: "Use the standard form of 'to lie' or 'to lay' to say that you are now putting something on your desk." On the back of the card is the sentence: "I am laying this book on my desk."

The class decided to design a board with a curving involuted path divided into over 50 spaces, but after the dry run it was decided to have only 25 spaces from the "start" to the "finish." The rules for play evolved as follows:

1. Each team in its turn sends a representative in his/her turn forward to draw a card and respond to the item on it. Twenty seconds are allowed to respond.

2. If the response is judged appropriate by the teacher, the team's marker is advanced one space; if inappropriate, the team's marker is moved back one space.

3. After a response is given and before the teacher judges it, a representative in his/her turn on each of the other four teams has thirty seconds to write on a piece of paper "agree" if the response seems appropriate or "disagree" if the response seems inappropriate. If the response seems inappropriate a suitable response may also be written. These papers are held up for teacher judging.

4. Each of the four teams who did not initially respond to the item then has the following possible moves:
   A. One space forward for disagreeing with an inappropriate response
   B. Another space forward for suitably rephrasing an inappropriate response
   C. Remain in place for agreeing with an appropriate response
   D. One space back for either agreeing with an inappropriate response or disagreeing with an appropriate one.

It should be noted here that while the Sixth Period English Game treats problems of traditional grammar and standard usage, its format can just as well accommodate the teaching points of other approaches to language study. For example the development of syntactic maturity can be fostered with play cards requiring the combination of sentences, and dialect study can be reinforced with play cards requiring pattern practice and translations.

The requirement for all five teams to be involved in each play keeps student attention committed to the action. Perhaps because of this attention, disputes do arise over the suitability of some responses, especially when the response is grammatically appropriate but is not exactly in the form suggested on the back of the play cards. If a student has essentially followed the card's directions, though, the team is awarded a correct response. Zeal for play does wax and wane over the long haul, but most of the time it is a serious sanction to be denied the privilege of playing. As a rule, The Blood Turkeys, The Super Colts, The Marvelous Five, The Geniuses, and The Importants take The Sixth Period English Game very seriously.

NOTES

[1]Paul A. Twelker and Kent Layden, "A Basic Reference Shelf on Simulation and Gaming," in *The Guide for Simulations and Games for Education and Training*, by David W. Zuckerman and Robert E. Horn (Lexington, Mass.: Information Resources, Inc., 1973), p. 445.

[2]Michael Kiser and Larry Studt, "Putting Games into English and English into Games," *Media and Methods*, 10, No. 8 (1974), 27.

[3]Raymond J. Rodrigues, "Student-Created Games," *English Journal*, 65, No. 5 (1976), 70.

POEM-PLAY: TWO IDEAS FOR TEACHING

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No doubt I am like many other English teachers in tending to look at whatever I read with an eye to future use in the classroom. Once having begun this anxiety-prone occupation, we are seldom without feeling a need to renew our course material and revamp our methods. Since the days when I first tried to make the study of poetry appealing to disinclined students, for instance, I have been watching out for ways to overcome their resistance and, perhaps, even make the subject palatable. The teaching games described here are derived from two ideas which I came upon while browsing through back copies of the *Times Literary Supplement* and the BBC *Listener*. I have found them to be useful strategies for changing some of the stereotyped notions about poetry which many students hold (to their surprise, they all discover they can write poems). Furthermore, by giving the students opportunities to demonstrate aspects of poetic technique, these poetry games enable the teacher to teach inductively. They are an alternative to an introductory lecture on the uses of various poetic devices.

In the first poetry game, students create *haiku* poems by interacting with an imaginary "computer." Devised by Margaret Masterman and Robin McKinnon Wood during their work for the Cambridge Language Research Unit as a "do-it-yourself kit" for writing computerized poetry, this game provides an entertaining opening for class discussions on the nature of poetry and the composing process.[1] The second game can be used as a sequel to the first one. It involves students in a traditional Japanese parlor-game which produces a *renga*, a linked verse sequence of *tanka* written by a group of poets. The *haiku* and *tanka* models are particularly suited to game-playing because of their simplicity and brevity, although the ballad and sonnet forms can also be used.[2]

Game #1: Computerized *Haiku*.

Poetry composed by a *real* computer may be either generated randomly from a bank of words (the thesaurus) which have been sorted according to grammatical categories and metrical patterns, or controlled by a program which stipulates the word selection (the ordering guide) to achieve effects such as a rhyming scheme or alliteration. Arrangement of the lines (the frame) is the third part of the programmed information. After the programmer has fed the thesaurus, ordering guide, and frame into the machine, his part of the process is usually finished. The computer, dutifully following instructions, produces a poem, or, in some cases, an output which looks like this:

Darling darling
You are my fervent fondness,
My fond hunger thirsts for
temorhavgbaasvvk.

In the computer-poetry game, on the other hand, the student poets interact with and control the simulated "machine" at each step in the generation of their poems. Eventually they want to compile their own thesaurus and design their own frames, but as a start on poetry-play, I

think it is best to give them the following modification of the Masterman-Wood "do-it-yourself kit" with its list of words, ordering guide, and *haiku* frame. (I have made changes in order to adapt it for the classroom.)

The Thesaurus

List 1 (nouns)	List 2 (verbs)	List 3 (nouns)	List 4 (nouns)	List 5 (nouns)	List 6 (adjs.)	List 7 (sounds)	List 8 (adjs.)	List 9 (past parts.)
trees	see	sun	buds	spring	tall	bang	white	flit
streams	trace	moon	leaves	full	pale	hush	blue	fled
birds	glimpse	star	peaks	cold	dark	swish	red	dimmed
arcs	flash	cloud	ice	heat	faint	pfffft	black	cracked
grass	smell	storm	sun	sun	clear	whizz	grey	passed
sheep	taste	streak	rain	shade	round	flick	green	shrunk
deer	hear	tree	cloud	dusk	straight	shoo	brown	smashed
pools	seize	flower	dawn	day	slim	grrr	bright	blown
drops		bud	dusk	mist	fat	whirr	pure	sprung
stones		leaf	mist	woods	burst	crash	curved	crashed
bells		child	fog	hills	bright		crowned	gone
trails		moth	heat	pools			starred	fogged

The Ordering Guide

1st step: Your first selection from the thesaurus can be any word from List #1. Place this word in the frame (see below) in the slot marked (1). The word which you select for this position becomes the semantic center of the poem because most of your other choices will be related to it. Only your first choice is unrestricted; all future choices are specified in that the word to be chosen must go well with some other word which you have already placed in the frame.

2nd step: Choose a word from List #2 which goes with the first word you selected. Place this new word in the frame in slot (2). Complete the frame by selecting words from the thesaurus according to specifications. (The arrow indicated the already-chosen word with which the new word should fit; thus "2 ⟶ 1" means you should choose a word from List #2 which goes well with the word you have already chosen from List #1. When two numbers come after the arrow, the new word must fit with both of them.)

3rd step: 3⟶1
4th step: 4⟶1
5th step: 5⟶4
6th step: 6⟶5
7th step: 7⟶6
8th step: 8⟶6 and 1
9th step: 9⟶1 and 3

The Frame

All _____ in the _____
(8) (4)

I _____ _____ _____ in the _____
(2) (6) (1) (5)

_____ the _____ has _____
(7) (3) (9)

Sample Outputs

All bright in the mist
I flash clear pools in the shade
Hush the star has dimmed.

All brown in the dusk
I glimpse slim deer in the woods
Swish the streak has fled.

The procedure which I use for this game is first to give students a dittoed copy of the thesaurus, ordering guide, and frame. After they have

filled in the frame, I ask them to reproduce their completed poems on sheets of acetate for viewing on the overhead projector during the follow-up discussion. Some of the outputs are amusing for reasons that are immediately apparent, as an incongruous effect generally comes from inappropriate word choice. While discussing the merits or detractions of particular words in relation to their context in the frame, students often express dissatisfaction with the limited thesaurus they have been given. Then I have them, as a class, brainstorm their own thesaurus, using one of the four seasons as a motif to prevent their word lists from becoming unworkably heterogeneous.

When I ask students what they notice about the way their poems were formed, they mention the order in which they filled the blanks in the frame. They did not begin by selecting a word from the thesaurus to fill the first blank, then a word for the second blank, completing one line at a time, but worked outward from the semantic center of the frame. Students see that, in a very over-simplified fashion, they have replicated the process many poets go through when they create: poems germinate from a central image or line.

To provoke dissatisfaction with the thesaurus, and maybe with the frame as well, is one of the objects of this poetry game. As the authors of computerized *haiku* have observed, when computer-poets start writing a vivid thesaurus, and then test how these new words work out in practice, before they know it, they are making choices which call on their creative and critical faculties.

Game #2: Linking Poems into a Chain.

Renga is a form of verse in which a sequence of *tanka* stanzas (three *haiku* lines of 5, 7, 5 syllables followed by two lines of 7, 7) are written by several poets and linked together by a common subject, image, or mood. It can run to hundreds of lines, the longest on record being 23,500 verses. Although *renga*, and the less serious *haikai*, were diversions for court poets in medieval Japan, the rules of composition for a "linked verse gathering" were elaborate, even to the point of specifying how often "moon" and "cherry blossom" could be mentioned, and how the poet should fold the paper on which he recorded his verses.[3]

However, the essential elements in *renga*, the ones relevant to use in an English classroom, are the collective character of the game -- "the authors disappear as individuals in the interest of the common work," as Octavio Paz says -- and the way the verses are joined to create "the sense of a changing unity." Each poet must relate his verse to the preceding one, but at the same time turn the direction of the composition in a slightly different direction. The associations which link the verses may be logical, but more often they emanate from a kind of free association. Verses are arranged to suggest a movement from one season to another or from dawn to evening. The total effect of a *renga* has been compared to a horizontal scroll painting where the viewer moves from one short scene to another.

An example of one of these chain poems is *Monkey's Raincoat*, a segment of which is reproduced below. For my gloss to the left of the verses I have referred to the translator's notations in order to indicate how the verses are linked together by each poet's variations on an idea or an image from the lines written by his predecessor.[4] Because Japanese syllables are apt to carry double meanings, these links are not always apparent in translation. The number of syllables in the English version varies from the strict *tanka* form of the original.

The poet Sonche begins the sequence by establishing the mood and the season: the voices of insects have a desolate sound in the silence of an autumn evening.	in the ash bin the trickling has ended katydid
The poet Basho recalls that in the fall a poor peasant cannot keep his lantern lit through the hours after sunset.	autumn of scraping oil and retiring by dusk
The poet Tasui contrasts the poor peasant with the wealthy man who goes to bed early to enjoy the play of moonlight on his new green-smelling tatami.	green tatami level lie in the moon shade
The poet Kyorai sees the room with its new tatami as fit for a celebration.	delighted with setting the wine cups ten
And so on. The chain of verses continues as each poet takes his turn.	. . . . .

In my classes I have combined the computerized *haiku* game with the writing of a group poem modeled on this kind of *renga*. After one of the poems produced during the first game has been selected as a beginning verse for a *renga*, I divide the class into groups of four or five students. Each group starts with the same three lines of *haiku*, with Student A making it into a *tanka* by adding two lines of approximately seven syllables each (I do not insist on the exact number of syllables) and passes the poem to Student B. With the help of a thesaurus, ordering guide, and frame, this student writes a *haiku* which is related by some kind of association with the two lines created by Student A, and then passes the chain on to Student C, who in turn adds another link of seven-syllable lines. The process continues until every student in each group has had two turns at creating part of the poetry chain.

The various *renga* authored by the groups are then dittoed and circulated, or projected on the overhead. Even though all groups start with the same lines, the results, of course, turn out to be quite different. Consequently, they provide interesting points of contrast during ensuing discussions on such topics as the associative capacity of words, the nature of transitions, the function of imagery, and the reactions of an individual author to submersion in a communal endeavor.

Treating poetry-making as a form of play may appear to some teachers to be demeaning the art. I have found, on the contrary, that students come away from these games with an enhanced appreciation for the technical skill and imaginative power of the poet who is "playing" for real. They also discover that they know more about genuine poetry than they suspected.

NOTES

[1]Margaret Masterman and Robin McKinnon Wood, "The Poet and the Computer," *Times Literary Supplement* (June 18, 1970), pp. 667-668.

[2]The first European *renga* was produced by poets who confined themselves for five days in a Parisian basement, writing a multi-lingual communal poem based on the sonnet. For the results see Octavio Paz, Jacques Roubaud, Edoardo Sanguineti, and Charles Tomlinson, *Renga: A Chain of Poems* (New York: Braziller, 1971).

[3]Howard Hibbett, "The Japanese Comic Linked-Verse Tradition," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 23 (1960-61), pp. 76-92.

[4]Matsuo Basho, et.al., *Monkey's Raincoat*, trans. Maeda Cana (NY: Grossman, 1973).

FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Mayer, Mercer (illus.) *A Poison Tree and Other Poems*, and Parker, Elinor. *Echoes of the Sea*. Both: New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977.

Poetry books tend to be shelf-sitters, languishing unread while books in more popular genres attract browsers and circulate continuously. Despite fine collections, poetry does not attract readers, especially among older children, as readily as more accessible fiction does. It is particularly good, then, to have two fine new collections from which teachers will want to select and read to their children. Each is unique, though neither will fare well with casual shelf scanners.

Mayer's elegant, understated volume features sombre charcoal and chalk drawings on various toned papers. These are a far cry from the usual cheeky good humor of the artist. The drawings accompany a variety of poems dealing with intense emotions, also unlike Mayer's usual light-hearted animal stories. The directness of William Blake's opening poem causes a catch in the throat, so honestly does it comment on human stubbornness that kills friendship. The book closes with Langston Hughes' "Poem." Probably better known than Blake's, it speaks with disarming openness of a departed friend, grieved for, as we too seldom allow ourselves to express that emotion. In between, E.J. Scovill's first person poem asserts the pleasures of solitary fishing, and Elizabeth Coatsworth's poem comments about prisoner houseplants caught behind window bars.

Parker's anthology features crisp illustrations by Jean Vallario which are a marvel of miniscule dots creating pleasantly solid bird and animal forms; the technique is less effective in depicting quasi-human forms like mermaids and men. The book probably includes more poems about the sea and its environs than any but the most confirmed salt would want. Nonetheless, selected from among ten categories into which the poems are arranged there are several to which children will listen avidly when the teacher reads. Celia Thaxter's "The Sandpiper" has been widely anthologized; Witter Bynner's similarly titled poem includes different descriptions in shorter compass and simpler form. May Swenson's typical capably developed imagery causes us to see freshly: the wave/cattle image in "The Even Sea" seems so apt readers may wonder why they didn't think of it. Leigh Hunt, in "To Fish" speaks candidly and un-affectionately to scaly, mute, dreary-mouthed "wretches of the sea" that gape and bite.

Neither book is read-straight-through fare: that way lies satiation. Yet each is a remarkably varied collection teachers will find interesting, as will intermediate grade children who hear the poems. John W. Stewig, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Blume, Judy. *Starring Sally J. Freedman As Herself*. Scarsdale, N.Y.: Bradbury Press, 1977. pp. 298 Grades 4-7.

Ten year old Sally is indeed the star of Judy Blume's *Starring Sally J. Freedman As Herself*. She is the only rounded character in the book. The others are too dimensional--her warm, caring father; her tense, worried mother; her loving, wise grandmother; her brilliant, aloof brother.

Starring Sally . . .has no plot in the traditional sense. Instead, readers are provided with glimpses into the life of Sally and her family during their ten month stay in Miami during 1947. Two threads hold the story together--Sally's fear that her father will die and her suspicions that an elderly man in her apartment building is really Adolf Hitler in disguise. Both fears are temporarily resolved; the old man dies, her father lives.

The setting and background will be unfamiliar to most young readers. Blume refers to Hitler's wartime atrocities, to the jubilation when World War II ended, and to various entertainment stars of the late 1940's. Many of these references are explained, but they are not sufficient to give today's nine-eleven year old a keen sense of the post war era.

Nevertheless children will probably enjoy the book. Sally is a naive, yet questioning ten year old. Blume, using third person narration, lets Sally and the other characters speak in convincing, natural dialogue. And Sally's concerns are as familiar to many of today's children as they were to children thirty years ago. She puzzles over her mother, whose worries about her children's health are outrageous enough to be funny. She squabbles with her brother and her friends. She daydreams, alternately playing a heroine and a movie star, both a far cry from her timorous, small self.

Starring Sally . . . is not a literary masterpiece. It does not deal with burning social issues. It tells simply of a happy girl who lives with her loving middle class family. Everyday events provide enough "spice" to keep young readers interested, but not enough to worry concerned adults. Children probably will take it for what it is: light entertainment. Linda Western, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Cormier, Robert. *I am the cheese.* Pantheon, 1977. 234 pp. SHS

Anthony Delmonte, an honest, hardworking reporter, does a story that discloses collusion among big-time crooks and government officials. As a result he and his family are are threatened. A special agency of the U.S. government tries to protect them. Despite sophisticated efforts by this agency, hit men track the family down and attack them viciously. Mr. and Mrs. Delmonte are killed; their teen-age son, Paul, is badly hurt and is taken to a sanitarium. He spends three years there, a pitiable emotional wreck.

All this is mere background. In its foreground the novel tells of Paul's stay at the sanitarium. It does so in a complex narrative with two main strands. One is an account of an hallucinatory bicycle trip Paul makes to visit his father. The other is an account of several interviews Paul has with a therapist-interrogator named Brint. These interviews have been recorded; we learn of them by reading transcripts. The transcripts show Brint working skillfully to help Paul retrieve his memory of events leading up to the fatal assault.

The two strands converge gradually. Paul's bike trip takes him back to the motel in which he and his family spent their last night together. Brint's coaxing takes Paul nearer and nearer to an accurate recollection of what happened after they left that motel. And Paul, remembering more and more, holds more and more back from Brint, fearing that Brint wants only to learn whether Paul has retained any undisclosed information about the scandal. This is Brint's goal; he may be working both for the mob and the government. A final report based upon his work suggests that Paul is worthless as a witness and should perhaps be "terminated."

It is an intentionally unpleasant book. With Wasteland imagery, hallucinatory narration, and a depiction of unrelieved horror, Cormier has tried to write for young readers the sort of thing Kafka, Camus, and Solzhenitsyn have written for adults. I would like to call it a good try, but it is not. It lacks texture. Mr. and Mrs. Delmonte are cardboard thin. Their dialogue is banal. Paul is neither heroic nor interesting. The evil that is supposed to pervade the novel is never shown incarnate in people, except now and then in Brint. Young readers able to read *I am the cheese* would do better to go to the adult fiction it imitates. Richard Western
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee